

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7766
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, SN
SUBJ: ICFTU-ARO ASIAN LABOR SUMMIT

REF: A. SINGAPORE 1908; B. EC BRUSSELS 03911; C. TOKYO 6931 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. IN DISCUSSION WITH LABOFF, SINGAPORE TRADE UNION
OFFICIAL EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH RECENT ASIAN LABOR SUMMIT
AND ARO EXECUTIVE MEETING. NOTHING VERY CONCRETE EMERGED FROM
THESE MEETINGS IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS, BUT SUMMIT
PARTICIPANTS DID EXPRESS GENERAL SUPPORT FOR ARO PRESIDENT
NAIR'S RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN A PAPER PRESENTED TO
THEM. WHILE EXECUTIVE BOARD DID NOT AUTHORIZE FORMAL LINK
BETWEEN ARO AND AAFLI, IT DID GIVE NAIR AUTHORITY TO EXPLORE
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THIS RELATIONSHIP FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ABSENCE OF PERIPATETIC SINGAPORE NATIONAL TRADES UNION
CONGRESS (NTUC) SECRETARY-GENERAL C.V. DEVAN NAIR, LABOFF
CALLED ON DEPUTY SEC. GEN. LAWRENCE SIA TO DISCUSS RESULTS
OF RECENT ICFTU-ARO LABOR SUMMIT AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
HELD IN SINGAPORE (REFTEL A). SIA FORCED TO DELAY APPOINTMENT

WITH LABOFF BECAUSE OF DEATH OF PROMINENT SINGAPORE TRADE UNIONIST, AS WELL AS PRESS OF RESIDUAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUMMIT/BOARD MEETINGS.

3. FROM SIA'S VIEWPOINT, LABOR SUMMIT WAS USEFUL IN INDICATING GENERAL SUPPORT FOR NAIR'S POLICIES IN ARO. IN THIS REGARD, DELEGATES TO SUMMIT PASSED A RESOLUTION WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ENDORSED "THE BASIC APPROACHES, PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS PRESENTED IN THE THEMATIC PAPER ON ASIAN LABOR AND THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ARO". RESOLUTION APPARENTLY ADOPTED WITH LITTLE OR NO PUBLIC DEBATE AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS. COPY OF RESOLUTION AND NAIR'S PAPER BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.

4. WHEN LABOFF MENTIONED THAT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN SUMMIT, SIA IMMEDIATELY DENIED THAT THEIR ABSENCE REFLECTED ANY DISAGREEMENT WITH ARO LEADERSHIP. ABSENCE OF THESE DELEGATES DUE PRIMARILY TO INCONVENIENT TIMING OF SUMMIT (CONFIRMING INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REFTEL B THAT BOB HAWKE OF AUSTRALIA COULD NOT ATTEND BECAUSE OF A SCHEDULE CONFLICT). SIA ALSO NOTED THAT, GIVEN TWO COUNTRIES' DIFFERENT LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRADE UNION PROBLEMS, UNIONISTS FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND WERE INCLINED TO A LESS ACTIVE ROLE IN THE ARO.

5. SIA SAID THAT NO NEW PROJECTS HAD EMERGED FROM THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE LABOR SUMMIT OR EXECUTIVE BOARD. HOWEVER, ARO SECRETARIAT WOULD NOW BEGIN TO INVESTIGATE FEASIBILITY OF TYPE OF PROJECTS (SUCH AS COOPERATIVES) MOOTED BY NAIR IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HIS THEMATIC PAPER. SINCE THE ARO HAS ONLY LIMITED FUNDS, THESE PROJECTS WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY PLANNED, SO AS TO ECONOMIZE ON FUNDS. SIA SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT ARO HOPED TO ESTABLISH ONE OF THESE PROJECTS IN THAILAND.

6. NOTWITHSTANDING PLEDGES OF SUPPORT AT THE SUMMIT FROM ILO DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL AND ESCAP EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NEITHER ORGANIZATION MADE A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO ARO. NEVERTHELESS, SIA WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED AND FELT THESE EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT HAD FORMED A USEFUL BASIS FOR FUTURE ARO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE.

7. TURNING TO ARO-AAFLI RELATIONSHIP, SIA SAID THAT NO FORMAL LINK HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. HOWEVER, NAIR WAS GIVEN BOARD'S BLESSING TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A RELATIONSHIP WITH AAFLI AND THE FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION. CHARGE IS SCHEDULED TO CALL ON NAIR ON MAY 25 AND WE HOPE TO GET A FURTHER READING ON THIS MATTER AT THAT TIME. GRANT

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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